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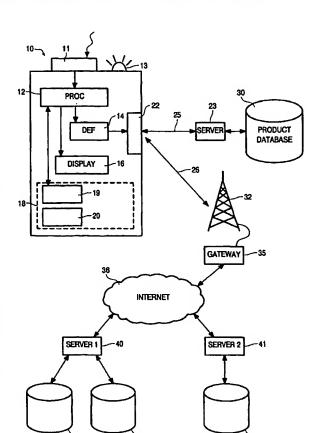
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(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR MATCHING COLOURS



(57) Abstract: A portable colour sampling device (10) facilitates comparison of a colour sampled from an object using an optical sensor (11) with a database (30,42,43,44) of stored colours. The database (30,42,43,44) of stored colours includes a merchandise database of articles for sale, and an indication of the location of those articles, including an indication of some or all of retailer identity, store location, in-store location, article description or product ID, class of article and the like. A user points the colour sampling device at an article to be sampled, and a colour definition data file is generated for transmission to a database of articles. The database returns to the sampling device a list of merchandise that matches the sampled colour or colours and any other matching criteria such as class of article, product code, and geographic proximity.